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EPA Region III

Office of Public Affairs

Mid-Atlantic Headlines

Tuesday, April 30, 2013

*** DAILY HOT LIST ***

Editorial: River impaired

SCRANTON TIMES-TRIBUNE The Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission don't know exactly what is causing the disfigurement of smallmouth bass throughout the southern stretches of the Susquehanna River. But they do know this: the lower Susquehanna formally should be declared "impaired" so that the source of the problem can be identified and attacked. According to the state Department of Environmental Protection, however, no such designation is necessary. In a circular argument, a spokesman contended that disfigurement of fish in the lower Susquehanna doesn't necessarily mean much because the DEP also has found fish dying in streams with no known pollution problems, making it difficult to determine which, if any, pollutants are at play in the Susquehanna case. But the objective is to find out. An impairment designation would require the DEP to identify the source affecting the fish and develop a long-term remediation plan. The foundation and the fish commission have documented that bass populations are experiencing lesions and intersex traits pointing to contamination and forewarning of potential problems for other types of wildlife. The federal Environmental Protection Agency should not wait for a formal impairment request from the DEP. It should use its own data, issue an impairment finding and start the process of restoring the health of the fish population. Doing so would serve not only the health of the river but the regional economy since, according to the foundation, fishing and river recreation supports thousands of jobs.

DEP Says Gas Drilling Did Not Contaminate Susquehanna County Well Water

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection says a 16-month long investigation concluded that gas drilling did not cause nearby residential water wells to contain high levels of methane in Franklin Township, Susquehanna County. Speaking to StateImpact last September at a protest in Philadelphia, Franklin Forks resident Tammy Manning said she was convinced gas drilling caused her water to go bad. Manning says her well water began spewing like a geyser in December, 2011. She says the contaminated water made her granddaughter vomit, before the family realized it was unsafe to drink. "We want the gas company to leave our area," said Manning. "I just feel like in 20 years, instead of going to war over oil, we'll go to war over water." But DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly says the gas company is not to blame. The agency's decision was based on isotopic testing, which showed the methane "fingerprint" did not match the methane extracted from WPX Energy gas wells, which are about 6,000 feet from the contaminated private drinking water wells.... Isotopic testing and historical data are two ways to trace methane migration. But that area of the state has a complicated geology with shallow pools of methane. Drilling with poorly constructed well casings can create a pathway for the shallow pools of gas to migrate into the water supply. In that case, the isotopic "print" of the gas would not necessarily match the methane extracted from the deep Marcellus formation. That's what the DEP determined happened in Dimock, Pa. David Yoxtheimer, a hydrogeologist with Penn State who studies methane migration, says well construction is key to preventing contamination. "That's common for [the gas] to come from shallower formations," says Yoxtheimer. "And so [the drillers] need to take extra precautions, otherwise the borehole acts as a conduit that allows the gas to migrate up vertically." Yoxtheimer says the naturally occurring thermogenic gas makes it tricky to trace the source of methane migration in Susquehanna County. "Seventy-eight percent of wells in Susquehanna County have measurable methane unrelated to drilling so that further complicates the situation. It's even more important to do pre-drilling testing."

How much is Delaware Bay's sea level rising?

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER (Sunday) A foot. That's how much sea level has risen in the Delaware Bay in the last century, measurements show. Two factors are driving the rise: The biggest reason is that the volume of the ocean is increasing - an event scientists say is related to warming water, caused by a warming planet, brought on in turn by higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The other factor is that the land is sinking. About 20,000 years ago, when glaciers extended roughly to the top of New Jersey, the land to the south was pushed up. Now it's subsiding again. The University of Pennsylvania's Benjamin P. Horton, a prominent sea-level researcher, has analyzed historic trends. Since 1900, sea level in the state has been rising at about three to four millimeters a year - double to triple the rates of the last 6,000 years. Scientists know the land isn't sinking any faster. So the ocean has to be increasing in volume. How is it happening? "Because you

add water from ice, or the ocean water warms up," Horton said. "Both of those require an increase in air temperature." Over the last century, global mean temperature has risen about one degree Centigrade. Many researchers expect the rate of sea-level rise to speed up.

Editorial: Neuman's reckless stormwater veto

BALTIMORE SUN Anne Arundel County's proposed stormwater fee provided newly appointed County Executive Laura Neuman with her first leadership test, and she failed. Her veto puts the county at risk of sanctions if it does not enact a fee structure by July 1, yet she appears to have no plan for complying with state and federal requirements for reducing the polluted stormwater that is washing into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The County Council should override her reckless decision without delay. Ms. Neuman has offered two explanations for her veto. The first is her notion that the residents of the county were insufficiently informed of what the proposed fee is and what it's for — a consequence, she theorizes, of the distraction to the government and the public caused by the protracted scandal involving her predecessor, John Leopold. It must be tempting for Ms. Neuman to blame everything she can on the disgraced Mr. Leopold, but she doesn't get off so easily this time. Anne Arundel County's stormwater fee proposal was developed through a six-month process that included input from the Chamber of Commerce, homebuilders, environmentalists and others. Since it was introduced in the County Council, it has been the subject of public hearings, which have resulted in dozens of amendments. As the other counties required to enact stormwater fees by the General Assembly's 2012 law have done so, the matter has attracted nationwide attention. Moreover, Anne Arundel officials have been talking about enacting a stormwater fee for at least five years. This should hardly be a surprise, and even if it was, the fact remains that the county is required to put a fee structure in place by July 1. ... If Ms. Neuman believes the fees are too high, she is welcome to propose an alternative, but she hasn't and doesn't intend to, saying instead that she's curious to see what the council comes up with next. But the council may not have much different to offer here since the amount of the fee was a function of the needs identified by what is now Ms. Neuman's public works department and the financing mechanism for addressing them was determined in consultation with what is now her finance department. The councilmen could propose something lower or phase the fee in, but the county would still risk failing to meet its requirements under the Clean Water Act. That's the big picture here. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set tough new water quality targets for the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and Anne Arundel County has more bay shoreline and tributaries than any other jurisdiction. It has a lot to do to mitigate the effects of polluted stormwater that flows off of roofs, driveways and parking lots and into streams and rivers that feed the bay. If the county fails to meet the July 1 deadline, the state could theoretically take it to court and secure penalties that run into the tens of thousands of dollars. But the real risk comes if the county falls out of compliance with the Clean Water Act. Anne Arundel (along with the other counties required to enact stormwater fees) faces difficult goals for how much it must reduce its contribution of pollution into the Chesapeake Bay by 2025, and if meeting them seems expensive now, it will only get more so the longer the county waits. Ms. Neuman is free to dislike that fact. She can kick and scream and curse the EPA. But the bottom line is that when rainwater is channeled into storm sewers rather than soaking into the ground, it takes all sorts of pollution with it. One way or another, the county is going to be required to undertake a variety of projects to mitigate that problem. It can pay for them through a dedicated fee, or it can find the money by shortchanging police, schools, the fire department and all the other things the county pays for. But this exercise is not optional. Perhaps Ms. Neuman is playing populist here with an eye on the 2014 election, but someone needs to be the grown up in the room. The bill approved by the council was based on extensive study and consultation with experts and affected groups, and it reflected significant public input through the legislative process. There is no way for the council to come up with a well-thought-out alternative by July 1. Its best option is to override Ms. Neuman's veto and make any adjustments that are necessary down the road.

Commentary: Pitching in to save the bay

BALTIMORE SUN (By Kim Coble) Throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, we hear about local governments, businesses and citizens rolling up their sleeves to reduce pollution from all sectors: agriculture, sewage treatment plants, and urban and suburban runoff. They are working to restore local rivers and streams. That is the goal of the federal/state Chesapeake clean water blueprint (formally known as the Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, and state Watershed Implementation Plans). The blueprint, if fully implemented with programs in place by 2025, will restore clean water throughout the Chesapeake's 64,000-square-mile watershed.

Editorial Board: EPA speaks on how much radiation is too much

WASHINGTON POST IMAGINE THAT the Boston bombers didn't pack nails into pressure cookers but instead packed highly radioactive material. How would the government be responding? Part of the answer might lie in a document the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued this month, suggesting guidelines on how state and local officials should deal with potentially toxic nuclear contamination from disasters such as dirty bombs, power plant failures and atomic bomb detonations. Activists object that the guidelines would expose Americans to high doses of radiation instead of ensuring high levels of protection. The subtle subtext is that the continuing use of nuclear power is a direct danger against which the government is failing to protect people. Actually, nuclear power has an exceptional safety record, particularly compared with the illnesses and deaths for which air pollution from coal burning is responsible. It also poses unique risks for which the government should prepare responsibly. That's just what the EPA is doing. The critics say that the EPA is attempting to defy long-established legal standards for radioactive contamination. The document, they say, would allow Americans to drink water contaminated thousands of times past the legal limit. It would allow residents to remain in a disaster zone even when there's lots of dangerous material in the air. And, they claim, the EPA's suggestions would allow resettlement of areas that are unfit under the rules that govern toxic Superfund sites. The EPA responds that the government's legal safety standards haven't changed. The new guidelines aren't enforceable rules — they are suggestions to help local officials make tough decisions. In fact, the guidance repeatedly refers to meeting existing standards, not flouting them. The question, though, is how to handle a big radiological release in the real world.

Panel: Region needs to prepare for climate change

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT NORFOLK -- A panel of speakers laid out a grim scenario for Hampton Roads' future Monday night, predicting devastating effects if the region fails to adapt to escalating climate change. It is a scenario that is particularly troubling to the Navy because of its enormous footprint in the area, said Rear Adm. Philip Hart Cullom, deputy chief of naval operations for fleet readiness and logistics. Cullom was one of five speakers at a town hall meeting at Nauticus organized by Operation Free, a national coalition of veterans and security experts that portrays climate change as a threat to national security. "We have to figure out how we're going to adapt," Cullom said. "There are good futures. There are bad futures. It depends on what path we choose." Hampton Roads is threatened by rising sea level, increased flooding and more frequent natural disasters, said Joe Bouchard, a retired Navy captain and a former commanding officer of Norfolk Naval Station. Projections of those effects have worsened in the past five years, Bouchard said. "All the major military bases in Hampton Roads are threatened by sea-level rise to one degree or another," he said. "Keep in mind that federal spending is about 48 percent of our economy and the vast majority of that is defense spending. ... That means the economy of Hampton Roads is threatened."

Government considers allowing fracking in GW national forest

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE Apparently for the first time in America, the U.S. Forest Service is considering whether to allow horizontal drilling for natural gas, in the George Washington National Forest. Energy companies are saying "yes," environmental activists are saying "no," and governments are divided on whether roads, trucks and drilling equipment should be permitted in the national forest, a source of drinking water for 260,000 people. More than 54,000 public comments have been made, and Virginians oppose the gas prospecting by at least a 2-1 margin, according to Kate Wofford of the Shenandoah Valley Network, an environmental advocacy group that analyzed the comments. All of that controversy comes before anyone actually knows whether natural gas can be found and "fracked" out of Virginia's marginal piece of the Marcellus Shale formation. The ancient rock bed has yielded a huge energy bonus to the horizontal drilling and hydrofracturing process in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, but Marcellus resources are unproven in the western ridges of the Shenandoah Valley. No other national forest has updated its 15-year management plan since the nation's first horizontal,

hydraulically fractured well was drilled in 2005, at least as far as Ken Landgraf knows. “We are plowing a little bit of new ground with this,” said Landgraf, a planning officer with the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Marcellus formation lies west of Interstate 81 in Virginia.

EPA Gets 30 More Days to Propose Revisions to CAFO Rules

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT The Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation reached an agreement April 29 to give the agency an additional 30 days to propose a rule that would potentially expand the universe of regulated concentrated animal feeding operations. “EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation have agreed to extend the deadline for a proposed CAFO rule for 30 days from April 30, 2013,” the agency told BNA said in a statement. Foundation spokesman John Surrick also confirmed that the deadline had been postponed. EPA originally had reached a legal settlement in May 2010 with the environmental group to propose revisions by June 30, 2012, to the existing rules for CAFOs, but the agency later renegotiated the deadline to April 30, 2013 (Fowler v. EPA, D.D.C., No. 1:09-cv-5, 5/11/10; [192 DEN A-17, 10/4/12](#)).. The legal settlement required EPA to regulate more CAFOs because they are sources of phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment discharges that are adversely affecting water quality. Excessive nutrient pollution, which collectively refers to nitrogen and phosphorus, can cause oxygen-depleted “dead zones.” Under terms of the legal settlement, the proposed revisions would enable EPA to expand the universe of regulated CAFOs under the Clean Water Act by making it easier to designate animal feeding operations as CAFOs, which would increase the number of animal feeding operations that would qualify. Regulated CAFOs must obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits to control discharges of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment runoff under regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 122. The agency also was required under this 2010 settlement to propose more stringent Clean Water Act permitting requirements for land application of manure, litter, and wastewater



PENNSYLVANIA

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER

GreenSpace column: Time to go to bat for bats Bats are in trouble, and you can help. In 2006, scores of dead bats were found on the ground outside a cave in Albany, N.Y. Since then, biologists have been in a race to identify the cause and stop the carnage. Millions of insect-munching bats in 22 states have died. The malady, called white-nose syndrome because it involves a white fungus that appears on the muzzles of bats hibernating in caves, affects little brown bats the most. Wildlife experts are fearful nearly all of them in Pennsylvania and New Jersey - and well beyond - will die. But some little brown bats aren't dying. And some other bat species don't appear to be as vulnerable. By now, "every bat left in the landscape is precious," Bucknell University researcher DeeAnn Reeder said. You can help the bats by giving them summer homes. And you can help the researchers by joining a summer bat count. Bats are emerging from hibernation now, and they'll be looking for places to gather in "maternity colonies" to have their young. Usually, this is a barn, church steeple, abandoned house, or some other building. Even a tree. But buildings get torn down. Trees fall over. So putting up a bat house - the bat version of a bird nesting box - is one of the things that can be done to reduce stress on the bats in summer, said wildlife biologist Cal Butchkoski, one of the Pennsylvania Game Commission's true bat men.

How much is Delaware Bay's sea level rising? (Sunday) A foot. That's how much sea level has risen in the Delaware Bay in the last century, measurements show. Two factors are driving the rise: The biggest reason is that the volume of the ocean is increasing - an event scientists say is related to warming water, caused by a warming planet, brought on in turn by higher levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The other factor is that the land is sinking. About 20,000 years ago, when glaciers extended roughly to the top of New Jersey, the land to the south was pushed up. Now it's subsiding again. The University of Pennsylvania's Benjamin P. Horton, a prominent sea-level researcher, has analyzed historic trends. Since 1900, sea level in the state has been rising at about three to four millimeters a year - double to triple the rates of the last 6,000 years. Scientists know the land isn't sinking any faster. So the ocean has to be increasing in volume. How is it happening? "Because you add water from ice, or the ocean water warms up," Horton said. "Both of those require an increase in air temperature." Over the last century, global mean temperature has risen about one degree Centigrade. Many researchers expect the rate of sea-level rise to speed up.

Along NJ bay, rising sea draws ever closer (Sunday) The night Meghan Wren got stranded by floodwaters and had to sleep in her car, she knew it was time for a reckoning. She had been driving to her waterfront home along the Delaware Bay in South Jersey. As she crossed the wide marsh in the dark, the water rose quickly. It became too deep - ahead *and* behind. She had to stop and wait. To her, no longer were climate-change predictions an abstract idea. Sea level has been rising, taking her waterfront with it. "This isn't something that's coming," she later told a group of bay shore residents and officials. "It's here. We just happen to live in a place that will affect us sooner." Wren lives on tiny Money Island - more a peninsula of bayfront land with about 40 small homes and trailers in Cumberland County. Just visible across the grassy marsh is Gandys Beach with 80 homes. Farther south, Fortescue with 250 homes. All three are steadily disappearing. On the Atlantic coast, beach replenishment masks the effects of sea-level rise. But along the low-lying bay shore, veined with creeks, the problems are striking. With each nor'easter, more of the beachfronts erode. More of the streets and driveways flood. Septic systems, inundated with salt water, are failing. "We're seeing beyond the normal damage," said Steve Eisenhauer, a regional director with the Natural Lands Trust, which has a 7,000-acre preserve in the area. "We see the problems getting worse." In the last century, sea level in the bay has risen a foot, gauges show, partly because the warming ocean is expanding and polar ice is melting. Also, New Jersey is sinking. All the while, humans have been pumping more and more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. The planet's average temperature has increased. "All those links are very strong," said Pennsylvania State University's Raymond Najjar Jr., an expert on climate change in Mid-Atlantic estuaries. "The reason the sea is rising as fast as it is in the Delaware Bay is human-induced climate change," he said, echoing many experts.

PITTSBURGH TRIBUNE REVIEW

Chesapeake agrees to sell 162K acres of shale land Chesapeake Energy Corp. agreed to sell 162,000 acres of prospective Marcellus shale property in northeastern Pennsylvania for \$93 million to Southwestern Energy Co. on Monday. The deal, which is expected to close May 15, is part of a plan by Oklahoma City-based Chesapeake to raise as much as \$8 billion in cash this year from selling assets. Company spokesman Jacque Bland declined to comment because Chesapeake was in a “quiet period” preceding its release of earnings on Wednesday. The land sale follows the resignation of Chesapeake's controversial CEO Aubrey McClendon at the beginning of April. He agreed to depart in response to a shareholder revolt over his use of stakes in company-owned wells to secure personal loans and a long spending spree that left Chesapeake starved for cash. Houston-based Southwestern Energy said the acreage, which is mostly in Susquehanna and Wyoming counties, is producing Marcellus shale gas at a rate of 2,000 mcf per day from a total of 17 wells

Mating season of two peregrine falcons puts hold on repaving of Tarentum Bridge Not even the completion of a major road construction project can stand in the way of true love. PennDOT is delaying the repaving of the Tarentum Bridge until this summer so it won't interfere with the mating season of two peregrine falcons that make their home there, PennDOT spokesman Steve Cowan said. Repaving the bridge is the last step in PennDOT's \$7.7 million project to revamp about two miles of Route 366 between Fawn and New Kensington. “According to our project manager, the majority of the 366 project was completed last year,” Cowan said. “The only work remaining is the paving of the Tarentum Bridge, which will take place after August 1st due to the nesting season of the peregrine falcons living under the bridge.” The paving will be completed on two weekends, Cowan said. “The contractor will have one weekend for each side of the bridge to detour traffic,” he said. “The dates have not been scheduled at this point.” The project, started in June, included the building of a new roadway between Tarentum Bridge and Fawn and added new turning lanes at the East 10th Avenue intersection to alleviate traffic congestion.

Dawson asking residents to participate in spring clean upDawson Borough residents and officials are getting ready to clean up the town. Council has designated Wednesday through Saturday as spring cleanup days for residents. ...

STATE IMPACT PENNSYLVANIA

DEP Says Gas Drilling Did Not Contaminate Susquehanna County Well Water The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection says a 16-month long investigation concluded that gas drilling did not cause nearby residential water wells to contain high levels of methane in Franklin Township, Susquehanna County. Speaking to StateImpact last September at a protest in Philadelphia, Franklin Forks resident Tammy Manning said she was convinced gas drilling caused her water to go bad. Manning says her well water began spewing like a geyser in December, 2011. She says the contaminated water made her granddaughter vomit, before the family realized it was unsafe to drink. “We want the gas company to leave our area,” said Manning. “I just feel like in 20 years, instead of going to war over oil, we'll go to war over water.” But DEP spokeswoman Colleen Connolly says the gas company is not to blame. The agency's decision was based on isotopic testing, which showed the methane “fingerprint” did not match the methane extracted from WPX Energy gas wells, which are about 6,000 feet from the contaminated private drinking water wells.... Isotopic testing and historical data are two ways to trace methane migration. But that area of the state has a complicated geology with shallow pools of methane. Drilling with poorly constructed well casings can create a pathway for the shallow pools of gas to migrate into the water supply. In that case, the isotopic “print” of the gas would not necessarily match the methane extracted from the deep Marcellus formation. That's what the DEP determined happened in Dimock, Pa. David Yoxtheimer, a hydrogeologist with Penn State who studies methane migration, says well construction is key to preventing contamination. “That's common for [the gas] to come from shallower formations,” says Yoxtheimer. “And so [the drillers] need to take extra precautions, otherwise the borehole acts as a conduit that allows the gas to migrate up vertically.” Yoxtheimer says the naturally occurring thermogenic gas makes it tricky to trace the source of methane migration in Susquehanna County. “Seventy-eight percent of wells in Susquehanna County have measurable methane unrelated to drilling so that further complicates the situation. It's even more important to do pre-drilling testing.”

In Sunbury, Drilling Waste, Politics, And A Pile Of Dirt A pile of dirt has sparked controversy in the city of Sunbury, Northumberland County. Recently, an otherwise civil city council meeting devolved into a shouting match. Councilman Joe Bartello and Mayor David Persing sparred over the city's stormwater management rules. “It's already a law!” Bartello yelled. “Council doesn't have to vote to get a stormwater plan!” “Just bring us something that proves they need [a stormwater plan].” Persing fired back. “I can't give you more than you already have,” Bartello replied, “You have the codebook.” “You never gave me a thing!” the mayor shouted back, “What the hell did you give me?” It turns out shouting matches are not all that uncommon at Sunbury city council meetings, but the controversy over this dirt has been going on for months.

Natural Gas Leaks from Pipeline in McKean County An unknown amount of natural gas escaped into the atmosphere Saturday from a pipeline owned by Atlas Energy.A considerable amount of natural gas and crude oil residue blew out of a pipeline when a valve broke in Bradford Township on Saturday afternoon. Around noon, passersby on U.S. Route 219 reported the spill, visible from the highway shooting about 60 feet in the air out of a pipe, according to fire chief Don Fowler of the Lafayette Township Volunteer Fire Department

Corbett: Decision on Western PA Petrochemical Plant Likely Next Year Shell has not yet made a final decision regarding plans to build a multibillion-dollar petrochemical plant in Beaver County. Governor Corbett says he now expects to know whether Shell Oil Co. will build a multibillion-dollar ethane cracker plant in Beaver County in 2014, according to the Pittsburgh Business Times. Many observers expected a final decision from Shell by June 30 of this year, after the company signed a six-month extension in December with the landowner Horsehead Corp. “I've always thought it would early next year,” Corbett told the Business Times, “In all conversations I've had with them, they're still moving forward.” The proposed facility would convert the ethane found in shale deposits into ethylene, which is used to produce plastics. The project has been hailed by Corbett as a much-needed job creator, which would draw on the state's vast natural gas reserves. The plant would employ between 400 to 600 people; and according to an industry-funded study, it could create up to 20,000 indirect jobs.

HARRISBURG PATRIOT-NEWS

Increasing Harrisburg's tree cover could help abate water system problems (April 28) HARRISBURG — The 16 trees planted along Derry Street will absorb rainwater, shade streets and — according to some studies — might even help people living nearby make better choices. Volunteers from the South Allison Hill Homeowners and Residents Association and staffers from Community Action Commission and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation spent Saturday afternoon planting the trees on Derry between 13th and 18th streets. However, there was more to the effort that met the eye. To start, the rainwater absorption benefit could be critical for Harrisburg, if those organizations do future plantings as planned. The capital city's stormwater system is in such disrepair that any significant amount of rainfall will cause it to overflow into the wastewater treatment system, said City Councilman Bruce Weber, who was helping the volunteers. The state Department of Environmental Protection and federal Environmental Protection Agency are pressing the city to upgrade its system, but that would cost between \$50 million and \$60 million. With \$370 million in debt, a multimillion-dollar operating deficit and nonexistent credit rating, the city won't have the money anytime in the foreseeable future. Not that trees alone are the answer. And even if they were, it would take about 27,000 of them to do the job, said the Department of Natural Resources' Urban and Community Forestry Program Specialist Ellen Roane. That's an estimate derived using the National Tree Benefit Calculator - and not quite the magnitude of the expansion Roane and Chesapeake Bay grassroots coordinator Andrew Bliss have planned for Harrisburg's TreeVitalize program. But Saturday was the start of what could be a successful and beneficial initiative that's taken root in Pennsylvania's cities, in particular, Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, where volunteers are planting thousands of trees each year, Roane said.

JOHNSTOWN TRIBUNE-DEMOCRAT

Marcellus gas drill site planned in Jackson Twp. An internationally-known energy company hopes to develop a Marcellus Shale well in Jackson Township in the fall. Chevron officials say they expect to have a state mining permit soon that will allow them to drill an assessment well on a multi-acre site alongside Blackburn Road. If all goes as planned, construction — primarily excavation work — will begin in August or September on a sportsmen's club property to get the pad site ready for drilling, said Mikal Zimmerman, Chevron's policy and public affairs officer. “We're starting with one well. And adding this well. ... And the information we gather from it will help us determine how to proceed next,” said Zimmerman, noting the gas the well yields will give Chevron officials the “hard data” they need to decide whether more wells should follow nearby. Chevron has been an oil industry giant for decades but dove into the Marcellus Shale market in 2011. The company purchased Moon Township-based Atlas Energy that year for \$3.2 billion — a move that added 486,000 acres in Marcellus gas rights to its holdings. Just months later, Chevron added 228,000 acres in Chief Oil and Gas lease rights, including sprawling tracts in Cambria and Somerset counties. Chevron is among several major companies that have been drawn in by the promise of plentiful Marcellus gas. Chevron's Jackson Township well would be placed on Goldenrod Sportsmen's Club property alongside Blackburn Road, Zimmerman said.

SCRANTON TIMES TRIBUNE

Editorial: River impaired The Chesapeake Bay Foundation and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission don't know exactly what is causing the disfigurement of smallmouth bass throughout the southern stretches of the Susquehanna River. But they do know this: the lower Susquehanna formally should be declared “impaired” so that the source of the problem can be identified and attacked. According to the state Department of Environmental Protection, however, no such designation is necessary. In a circular argument, a spokesman contended that disfigurement of fish in the lower Susquehanna doesn't necessarily mean much because the DEP also has found fish dying in streams with no known pollution problems, making it difficult to determine which, if any, pollutants are at play in the Susquehanna case. But the objective is to find out. An impairment designation would require the DEP to identify the source affecting the fish and develop a long-term remediation plan. The foundation and the fish commission have documented that bass populations are experiencing lesions and intersex traits pointing to contamination and forewarning of potential problems for other types of wildlife. The federal Environmental Protection Agency should not wait for a formal impairment request from the DEP. It should use its own data, issue an impairment finding and start the process of restoring the health of the fish population. Doing so would serve not only the health of

the river but the regional economy since, according to the foundation, fishing and river recreation supports thousands of jobs.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

WASHINGTON POST

Editorial Board: EPA speaks on how much radiation is too much IMAGINE THAT the Boston bombers didn't pack nails into pressure cookers but instead packed highly radioactive material. How would the government be responding? Part of the answer might lie in a document the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued this month, suggesting guidelines on how state and local officials should deal with potentially toxic nuclear contamination from disasters such as dirty bombs, power plant failures and atomic bomb detonations. Activists object that the guidelines would expose Americans to high doses of radiation instead of ensuring high levels of protection. The unsubtle subtext is that the continuing use of nuclear power is a direct danger against which the government is failing to protect people. Actually, nuclear power has an exceptional safety record, particularly compared with the illnesses and deaths for which air pollution from coal burning is responsible. It also poses unique risks for which the government should prepare responsibly. That's just what the EPA is doing. The critics say that the EPA is attempting to defy long-established legal standards for radioactive contamination. The document, they say, would allow Americans to drink water contaminated thousands of times past the legal limit. It would allow residents to remain in a disaster zone even when there's lots of dangerous material in the air. And, they claim, the EPA's suggestions would allow resettlement of areas that are unfit under the rules that govern toxic Superfund sites. The EPA responds that the government's legal safety standards haven't changed. The new guidelines aren't enforceable rules — they are suggestions to help local officials make tough decisions. In fact, the guidance repeatedly refers to meeting existing standards, not flouting them. The question, though, is how to handle a big radiological release in the real world.

Letter: Warning: Catfish not safe for eating I don't know how health departments in Maryland and the District can say that they “strongly discourage eating catfish” from the Anacostia River, as was reported in the April 26 news article “Bay's smallmouth bass under siege, report says.” There certainly are warnings about eating many species of fish caught locally, but you have to hunt online for them. If health officials truly wanted to discourage people from eating contaminated fish, they would demand that warnings be printed on the licenses that fishermen are required to purchase. No such warnings, “strong” or otherwise, are there.

WAMU RADIO (NPR)

Invasive Plant Threatens Maryland's Deep Creek Lake Maryland's Department of Natural Resources is discussing ways to deal with an invasive aquatic plant in Deep Creek Lake. The Deep Creek Lake Policy and Review Board will meet Monday night, and will receive an update on the state's assessment of Eurasian watermilfoil. Some area residents say the plant threatens to strangle recreational boating on the lake. The DNR says a study last year found that milfoil was not outcompeting native aquatic plants. The agency says it will study the matter further this summer, but won't try to kill the invasive plant. Milfoil forms dense mats of vegetation that can entangle swimmers and hinder boats. It first arrived in Wisconsin in the 1960s and has become a nuisance nationwide.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (D.C.)

Study: Climate change could affect Potomac River basin drinking water supplies WASHINGTON — A new study finds climate change could cut stream flows in the Potomac River basin, a major source of drinking water in the Washington region. The study found by 2040 climate change could cut stream flows 35 percent. And a moderate drought combined with that worst-case scenario could mean mandatory water restrictions assuming changes are not made to the region's water supply system. The study was conducted for the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, which is charged with conserving water resources of the Potomac and its tributaries. The commission notes more than three quarters of the Washington region's water supply is taken from the Potomac. The commission includes members from Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania as well as the federal government and the District of Columbia.

DELAWARE

WILMINGTON NEWS JOURNAL

Progress reported in cleaning up Delaware's largest Superfund site The Environmental Protection Agency is reporting promising but uneven results in its latest report on costly efforts to control toxic pollution creeping away from Delaware's largest Superfund cleanup site. After 11 years of publicly financed work, contamination levels are sharply lower in wells just outside an underground containment wall that surrounds 23 central acres of the former Metachem Products chlorinated benzene factory north of Delaware City. Bankruptcy put the dangerously unstable chemical plant in taxpayer hands in May 2002. But in some areas, toxic pollution concentrations are hundreds and even thousands of times higher than federal drinking-water limits, at depths of up to 165 feet, in groundwater once believed to be safe from any surface spills. Levels in one well just outside the buried wall had 800 times more chlorinated benzene than the EPA allows in public taps, and 14,200 times more cancer-causing benzene. The groundwater results appear in a newly released status report on site conditions for the first half of 2012, the most recent period available. “We’ve got pretty high – very high – concentration of contamination in a couple of those wells in the shallow Potomac Aquifer,” said Brad White, EPA manager for the site. Inside the 23-acre containment area, levels of poisonous chemicals once used to make herbicides and pesticides are vastly higher, and are unlikely to fall to safe levels even after a decade of control and groundwater treatment, federal officials have acknowledged.

Rain barrel sale benefits Center for the Inland Bays The Delaware Center for the Inland Bays is selling ready-to-install rain barrels for \$40.

DELAWARE CAPE GAZETTE

Work begins on Garden of the NavigatorsThe Garden of the Navigators has set sail. An outline of the new garden is visible in Cranberry Park in Rehoboth Beach as excavation work gets underway. Architect Ray Zebrowski, project manager, said the garden is on schedule and will be complete before a delegation from sister-city Greve-in-Chianti, Italy, arrives in mid-June. Rehoboth Beach Sister Cities Association is building the garden at Olive and Lake ...

WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON GAZETTE

Urban farming bill headed to council CHARLESTON, W. Va. -- Charleston residents would be able to raise up to six laying hens anywhere in the city -- no permits, no red tape -- under an urban agriculture bill to be introduced at City Council May 6. The bill, written by neighborhood planner...

Blog: Big hearing starts in Patriot Coal bankruptcy caseThere was action in the streets and in the courtroom today in St. Louis. A key hearing began on Patriot’s effort to use its bankruptcy reorganization to throw out its contract with the United Mine Workers of America. And plenty of UMWA members, retirees, officials and supporters were on hand outside. Local station KMOV reported:

CHARLESTON DAILY MAIL

Capito says bill will stop overreach of EPA CHARLESTON, W. Va. - U.S. Rep. Shelley Moore Capito, R-W. Va., wants to "push back" against the federal Environmental Protection Agency when it comes to the permitting process for coal mines. Capito and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell...

Citizen Action Group opposes purchase of power plant CHARLESTON, W. Va. - West Virginia Citizen Action Group has joined the organizations objecting to Mon Powers proposed purchase of a coal-fired power plant. The group says the \$1.1 billion deal would raise rates for all but the largest industrial customer...

MARTINSBURG JOURNAL

Protecting the watershed and bay W.Va. DEP looks to improve quality of water in Rockymarsh Run. CHARLES TOWN - It is just a little spot in Jefferson County, running no more than nine miles long and two miles wide, but Rockymarsh Run is part of the Potomac River Watershed, which dumps into the Chesapeake Bay. Rockymarsh Run, along with Warm Springs Run in Morgan County, is on the impaired waters list complied by the West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection. Currently, all the WVDEP knows about the locations on the list is that they are not meeting their designated uses. There is no data on the sources of pollution, which are causing the most pollution or even where the sources are located. The beginning of a five-year process to sample, model and design a pollution budget for the area begins with identifying the locations and weeding out any "noise," said Alana Hartman, Potomac Basin Coordinator for the WVDEP. "Maybe there was a storm one year or a temporary event such as a spill at a location," Hartman said. "Every month for a year, the samples are taken consistently at the same place and then there's a really nice data set to look at and plug those numbers into a model." But first, the locations for the samples must be identified. Pollution budgets have two sections, Hartman said. One is for permitted or "point" sources, such as construction sites or wastewater plants. Point sources are often put under the most scrutiny, but also retain the most responsibility, because they can be controlled through the permitting process.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (W. VA.)

Group opposes power plant dealCHARLESTON, W. Va. -- The West Virginia Citizen Action Group has joined the organizations objecting to Mon Powers proposed purchase of a coal-fired power plant. The group says the \$1.1 billion deal would raise rates for all but the largest industrial cust...

Suspicious powder found in package near NitroA suspicious powder in a package that was found on a street near McJunkin Redman Corp. in Nitro has been sent to the FBI for testing, Deputy Emergency Manager C.W. Sigman said. An employee at McJunkin Redman was unwrapping some pac...



MARYLAND

BALTIMORE SUN

Editorial: Neuman's reckless stormwater veto Anne Arundel County's proposed stormwater fee provided newly appointed County Executive Laura Neuman with her first leadership test, and she failed. Her veto puts the county at risk of sanctions if it does not enact a fee structure by July 1, yet she appears to have no plan for complying with state and federal requirements for reducing the polluted stormwater that is washing into the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries. The County Council should override her reckless decision without delay. Ms. Neuman has offered two explanations for her veto. The first is her notion that the residents of the county were insufficiently informed of what the proposed fee is and what it's for — a consequence, she theorizes, of the distraction to the government and the public caused by the protracted scandal involving her predecessor, John Leopold. It must be tempting for Ms. Neuman to blame everything she can on the disgraced Mr. Leopold, but she doesn't get off so easily this time. Anne Arundel County's stormwater fee proposal was developed through a six-month process that included input from the Chamber of Commerce, homebuilders, environmentalists and others. Since it was introduced in the County Council, it has been the subject of public hearings, which have resulted in dozens of amendments. As the other counties required to enact stormwater fees by the General Assembly's 2012 law have done so, the matter has attracted nationwide attention. Moreover, Anne Arundel officials have been talking about enacting a stormwater fee for at least five years. This should hardly be a surprise, and even if it was, the fact remains that the county is required to put a fee structure in place by July 1. ... If Ms. Neuman believes the fees are too high, she is welcome to propose an alternative, but she hasn't and doesn't intend to, saying instead that she's curious to see what the council comes up with next. But the council may not have much different to offer here since the amount of the fee was a function of the needs identified by what is now Ms. Neuman's public works department and the financing mechanism for addressing them was determined in consultation with what is now her finance department. The councilmen could propose something lower or phase the fee in, but the county would still risk failing to meet its requirements under the Clean Water Act. That's the big picture here. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has set tough new water quality targets for the Chesapeake Bay watershed, and Anne Arundel County has more bay shoreline and tributaries than any other jurisdiction. It has a lot to do to mitigate the effects of polluted stormwater that flows off of roofs, driveways and parking lots and into streams and rivers that feed the bay. If the county fails to meet the July 1 deadline, the state could theoretically take it to court and secure penalties that run into the tens of thousands of dollars. But the real risk comes if the county falls out of compliance with the Clean Water Act. Anne Arundel (along with the other counties required to enact stormwater fees) faces difficult goals for how much it must reduce its contribution of pollution into the Chesapeake Bay by 2025, and if meeting them seems expensive now, it will only get more so the longer the county waits. Ms. Neuman is free to dislike that fact. She can kick and scream and curse the EPA. But the bottom line is that when rainwater is channeled into storm sewers rather than soaking into the ground, it takes all sorts of pollution with it. One way or another, the county is going to be required to undertake a variety of projects to mitigate that problem. It can pay for them through a dedicated fee, or it can find the money by shortchanging police, schools, the fire department and all the other things the county pays for. But this exercise is not optional. Perhaps Ms. Neuman is playing populist here with an eye on the 2014 election, but someone needs to be the grown up in the room. The bill approved by the council was based on extensive study and consultation with experts and affected groups, and it reflected significant public input through the legislative process. There is no way for the council to come up with a well-thought-out alternative by July 1. Its best option is to override Ms. Neuman's veto and make any adjustments that are necessary down the road.

Commentary: Pitching in to save the bay (By Kim Coble) Throughout Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia, we hear about local governments, businesses and citizens rolling up their sleeves to reduce pollution from all sectors: agriculture, sewage treatment plants, and urban and suburban runoff. They are working to restore local rivers and streams. That is the goal of the federal/state Chesapeake clean water blueprint (formally known as the Total Maximum Daily Load, or TMDL, and state

Watershed Implementation Plans). The blueprint, if fully implemented with programs in place by 2025, will restore clean water throughout the Chesapeake's 64,000-square-mile watershed.

Baltimore man sentenced in hazardous waste case A Baltimore man was sentenced to 18 months in jail after pleading guilty Monday in circuit court to illegally dumping hazardous waste in an empty city lot, Attorney General Douglas Gansler said.

Volunteers pour into Fort McHenry wetlands to clean up Big crowd gets beautiful weather for trash collection, tree planting. More than 100 gloved volunteers, some in boots and others in waist-high waders, streamed along narrow paths and historic sea walls Saturday in a secluded nook of wetlands just south of Fort McHenry, their eyes scanning for trash or the perfect spot to plant a sapling.

MARYLAND GAZETTE NEWSPAPERS

Leggett talks up tree bill at planting Moments before he hoisted a shovelful of dirt around the newly planted yellowwood tree outside the Bethesda Library on Friday, County Executive Isiah Leggett described his tree canopy bill as balanced and fair. The tree planting, organized by the nonprofit group Conservation Montgomery, took place on Arbor Day, but was also was meant to publicize Leggett's Tree Canopy Conservation bill (35-12), which a county council committee will take up on June 24. The bill aims to save and expand the county's tree canopy by minimizing the loss of trees during development, especially in smaller projects and private lots. Homeowners or builders who were constructing a new home, adding more than 5,000 square feet to an existing home or excavating 100 cubic yards, or anyone else who has to get a sediment control permit, would be required to pay into a fund for tree canopy conservation. The proposed fees are on a sliding scale from 25 cents per square foot up to \$1.35 per square foot of canopy lost, according to the bill.

VIRGINIA

RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH

Va. scientist finds rising East Coast sea levels GLOUCESTER POINT For years, computer simulations have predicted that climate change will cause East Coast sea levels to rise at an increasingly rapid rate. In a 2010 study, Virginia Institute of Marine Science oceanographer John Boon looked at decades of tide-gauge readings for evidence of this ever-faster-rising water. Boon didn't find the accelerating sea levels, and he was skeptical that they existed. But using a more sophisticated statistical method, Boon looked at the tide-gauge readings again in a 2012 study. This time, he found that sea levels are indeed rising at an increasing rate from Norfolk to Nova Scotia. To a layman, this might look like a flip-flop. But to scientists,

this is how the job is done. "A skeptic is basically a normal scientist at work," said Boon, 73. "You look at the evidence and say, 'I need to be convinced.'" Boon added that he was a skeptic — not a denier. Two other studies last year, by Old

Dominion University and the U.S. Geological Survey, also found rising sea-level rates along much of the East Coast. Using differing methodologies, the three studies in effect validated one another.

Richmond picks new manager for James River Park system A veteran Richmond parks employee has been picked to manage the 550-acre James River Park system. The city announced Monday afternoon that Nathan J. Burrell, who has worked in the system since 2003 as a trails manager, will be its new manager. Burrell replaces Ralph White, who worked in the department for more than 30 years before retiring in December. Burrell was hired after a nationwide search and a review by a citizen advisory committee, according to the city. "I am confident in Mr. Burrell's ability to manage and maintain the James River Park, which is one of the city's greatest assets and widely appreciated by so many Richmond-area residents as well as outdoor enthusiasts from across the country," said Norman C. Merrifield, director of the city's Parks, Recreation and Community Facilities Department.

Inchworms -- love them or hate them? Inchworms are descending on the Richmond area. Do you love them or hate them? Do you have a lot on your property? Reporter Rex Springston is working on a story for Tuesday's paper. Please email him a...

NORFOLK VIRGINIAN PILOT

Panel: Region needs to prepare for climate change NORFOLK -- A panel of speakers laid out a grim scenario for Hampton Roads' future Monday night, predicting devastating effects if the region fails to adapt to escalating climate change. It is a scenario that is particularly troubling to the Navy because of its enormous footprint in the area, said Rear Adm. Philip Hart Cullom, deputy chief of naval operations for fleet readiness and logistics. Cullom was one of five speakers at a town hall meeting at Nauticus organized by Operation Free, a national coalition of veterans and security experts that portrays climate change as a threat to national security. "We have to figure out how we're going to adapt," Cullom said. "There are good futures. There are bad futures. It depends on what path we choose." Hampton Roads is threatened by rising sea level, increased flooding and more frequent natural disasters, said Joe Bouchard, a retired Navy captain and a former commanding officer of Norfolk Naval Station. Projections of those effects have worsened in the past five years, Bouchard said. "All the major military bases in Hampton Roads are threatened by sea-level rise to one degree or another," he said. "Keep in mind that federal spending is about 48 percent of our economy and the vast majority of that is defense spending. ... That means the economy of Hampton Roads is threatened."

Suffolk ready to voice support for SPSA SUFFOLK -- The city is about to voice support for a plan to keep the Southeastern Public Service Authority as the regional solid-waste disposal agency after 2018, when an operating agreement with Hampton Roads cities is set to expire. The City Council is scheduled to vote Wednesday on a resolution that would put the city on record as favoring a continuation of SPSA but with some modifications, and pledging to work with other communities to make it happen. Virginia Beach adopted a similar resolution April 9. Norfolk is expected to take up the matter in May. The resolutions are the result of an 18-month study by representatives of SPSA's eight member communities. For years, Suffolk and other Hampton Roads communities have explored a variety of options for solid-waste management after 2018, including forming new regional partnerships or going it alone. Those efforts came in the aftermath of a series of miscues that left the troubled agency in difficult financial shape. Created in 1976, the agency racked up huge debts on capital projects. With the economic downturn in 2008, trash collections declined, reducing its income stream. Near bankruptcy in 2010, SPSA sold its garbage-fueled power plant in Portsmouth to Wheelabrator Technologies for \$150 million. Since then, the agency has been gaining financial strength. SPSA Executive Director Rowland "Bucky" Taylor called the resolutions a "good step forward" toward a regional solution.

NEWPORT NEWS DAILY PRESS

NASA tests flower-based biofuel for jets In Hampton Roads, a jet engine may be the sound of freedom, but the contrail it leaves behind is nothing to salute. The cloud-like contrail is composed of ice crystals, soot, sulfur and other harmful elements that riddle the emissions of jet engines and are potentially harmful to people and the environment. But NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton has just finished up weeks of testing a renewable alternative flower-based biofuel for jet engines that could one day lead to cleaner skies by reducing the amount of carbon-based fuels used to power aircraft. "We wanted to focus on fuels that mitigated the CO2 buildup in the atmosphere," senior research scientist Bruce Anderson said Thursday.

"People think of NASA as being a space agency. Here at Langley, we focus a lot of effort on these types of things. They have an equal — or even more — impact on life here on Earth." Beginning in mid-February and running for several weeks, he said, NASA flew a DC-8 airplane 39,000 feet above its Dryden Flight Research Center at Edwards Air Force Base in California. The plane's four engines were filled with either conventional JP-8 jet fuel, which is essentially kerosene, or with a 50-50 blend of JP-8 and a fuel oil produced from the flowering camelina plant, commonly known as false flax. Researchers had tried to use pure camelina biofuel, but it shrank the seals in the fuel system and leaked out, forcing them to cut it with regular fuel so the seals would swell again.

ROANOKE TIMES

Ways to keep users from seeing red on the greenway Last week in this space we established that, at certain times and places, there’s a problem with user conflicts along the Roanoke River Greenway. Between my inbox, my blog and this newspaper’s Facebook page, the subject attracted scores and scores of comments from readers. Pedestrians feel threatened by speeding bicyclists; the cyclists feel threatened by dog owners who don’t control their leashed pooches; certain walkers hog the whole width of the asphalt path — and so on. So, what can be done about it? For some answers, I looked to some other communities that have more extensive greenway systems and longer experience dealing with user conflicts. The first was Raleigh, N.C., which has been developing a greenway network since 1976. It now has 100 miles of paved paths, said Victor Lebsock, Raleigh’s senior greenway planner. His first words of advice were that such conflicts will always exist. They’ll also always be greater in the spring, he said, because that’s when more users flock to greenways than any other time of the year. “I don’t think you can ever alleviate [conflict],” Lebsock said. “What you can do is mitigate it.” Since its inception, Raleigh has posted a 10-mph speed limit for cyclists on its greenway (it’s 15 mph here). They have a center line striped on certain congested sections, to remind users to keep to the right.

LYNCHBURG NEWS AND ADVANCE

Government considers allowing fracking in GW national forest Apparently for the first time in America, the U.S. Forest Service is considering whether to allow horizontal drilling for natural gas, in the George Washington National Forest. Energy companies are saying “yes,” environmental activists are saying “no,” and governments are divided on whether roads, trucks and drilling equipment should be permitted in the national forest, a source of drinking water for 260,000 people. More than 54,000 public comments have been made, and Virginians oppose the gas prospecting by at least a 2-1 margin, according to Kate Wofford of the Shenandoah Valley Network, an environmental advocacy group that analyzed the comments. All of that controversy comes before anyone actually knows whether natural gas can be found and “fracked” out of Virginia’s marginal piece of the Marcellus Shale formation. The ancient rock bed has yielded a huge energy bonus to the horizontal drilling and hydrofracturing process in Pennsylvania and West Virginia, but Marcellus resources are unproven in the western ridges of the Shenandoah Valley. No other national forest has updated its 15-year management plan since the nation’s first horizontal, hydraulically fractured well was drilled in 2005, at least as far as Ken Landgraf knows. “We are plowing a little bit of new ground with this,” said Landgraf, a planning officer with the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Marcellus formation lies west of Interstate 81 in Virginia.

Board investigates excess levels of ammonia in water The Nelson County Service Authority is investigating the source of excess ammonia coming into water collection sites, the authority’s executive director told the board of directors at a meeting last Thursday. Although the levels of ammonia coming into the plant are high, they are being reduced through treatment at the facility before the water is released to receiving streams, said George Miller, the authority’s executive director, adding there is not a health risk for the public. “It might be coming in at double digits but it’s leaving within the limits,” Miller said. The authority does not have enough information to be conclusive but staff is focusing on the Piney River station where the ammonia values are “off the chart,” Miller said. The five-year-old Piney River system is a closed system, which means water and other substances enter it through a connection like a sink drain or toilet. There is no infiltration from outside the connections, Miller said. “The logical deduction would be somebody’s dumping something,” South District Director Ed Rothgeb said. Miller said the numbers appeared higher after a rain storm, peaking at 5.32 milligrams per liter in December 2012. The permitted limit for that time was 2.5 milligrams per liter. The authority reached out to Aqua-Aerobics Systems, an Illinois-based company that sells water and waste treatment products and systems, for suggestions on how to alleviate the ammonia problem.

ASSOCIATED PRESS (VA.)

Tangier Island sinking into Chesapeake Bay TANGIER ISLAND, VA. — One day after Hurricane Sandy lashed this speck of land in the Chesapeake Bay last fall, islander Carol Moore hopped in her skiff and headed to a stretch of beach along The Uppards, one of the islands that comprise this remote outpost. A favorite haunt, Moore collects sea glass, pottery and arrowheads that she finds among the bleached oyster shells that blanket the beach. What she found there that day shocked her. Waves stirred by Sandy’s fierce winds had pounded the beach and scattered in the surf human remains from a graveyard of a former settlement called Canaan, an ancestral home of Moore’s mother’s family. “The first thing I saw was an exposed skeleton,” she said. “Then I saw a skull, oh Lord. Then as I walked around it was just more exposed graves and bones and hardware from caskets. It just bothered me so much.” Moore spent hours on the beach, contemplating what she had found and what it meant for her beloved island. Then she sprang to action. She called the state marine police. The sheriff’s department. Then finally a TV news station, which sent a crew to document her gruesome discovery. The televised footage did the trick. It attracted a team of state archaeologists to carefully gather skeletal remains for study and, ultimately, reburial. But what she found that day still haunts Moore. She frets about what is to come of this island dating back centuries to the earliest European visitors and whether future generations will enjoy it as she has. “I don’t want to have to tell stories to my grandchildren about Tangier,” sahe said. “I want them to experience what I have for 50 years. I’m scared to death we’re going to lose it.” Her concerns are not overstated. This island is disappearing. Once inhabited by up to 1,000 residents, the island’s current population of 500 is crowded today on several ridges of high ground, still only several feet above sea water. It’s not just rising seas alone, however, that make Tangier Island so vulnerable and Moore so fearful it will be consumed by the bay.

MISCELLANEOUS

BNA DAILY ENVIRONMENT REPORT

EPA Gets 30 More Days to Propose Revisions to CAFO Rules he Environmental Protection Agency and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation reached an agreement April 29 to give the agency an additional 30 days to propose a rule that would potentially expand the universe of regulated concentrated animal feeding operations. “EPA and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation have agreed to extend the deadline for a proposed CAFO rule for 30 days from April 30, 2013,” the agency told BNA said in a statement. Foundation spokesman John Surrick also confirmed that the deadline had been postponed. EPA originally had reached a legal settlement in May 2010 with the environmental group to propose revisions by June 30, 2012, to the existing rules for CAFOs, but the agency later renegotiated the deadline to April 30, 2013 (Fowler v. EPA, D.D.C., No. 1:09-cv-5, 5/11/10; [192 DEN A-17, 10/4/12](#)). The legal settlement required EPA to regulate more CAFOs because they are sources of phosphorus, nitrogen, and sediment discharges that are adversely affecting water quality. Excessive nutrient pollution, which collectively refers to nitrogen and phosphorus, can cause oxygen-depleted “dead zones.” Under terms of the legal settlement, the proposed revisions would enable EPA to expand the universe of regulated CAFOs under the Clean Water Act by making it easier to designate animal feeding operations as CAFOs, which would increase the number of animal feeding operations that would qualify. Regulated CAFOs must obtain National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permits to control discharges of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment runoff under regulations at 40 C.F.R. Part 122. The agency also was required under this 2010 settlement to propose more stringent Clean Water Act permitting requirements for land application of manure, litter, and wastewater.

Oil Industry Accuses EPA of Flawed Process for Tier 3 Standards The petroleum industry accuses EPA of pursuing a “flawed” implementation strategy for its proposed Tier 3 vehicle emission and fuel standards, asserting at a public hearing in

Chicago that the regulatory process conflicts with the procedural requirements of the Clean Air Act because EPA has not yet formally published the rule. The industry, however, clearly expresses a minority perspective during the second and final hearing on the Tier 3 proposal.

EPA 'Likely' to Fall Short of 2020 Goals for RCRA Corrective Action EPA says it is likely to miss its goal for implementing final corrective action plans at 95 percent of facilities regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act program due to lingering budgetary uncertainty and the complexity of cleaning up the remaining sites. Established in 1984, the RCRA Corrective Action Program requires owners or operators of facilities to investigate and clean up releases of hazardous pollutants into soil, groundwater, surface water, and air, including any contamination that has spread beyond site boundaries.

GAO Says EPA Risk Assessments Will Take More Than Decade to Complete EPA has made progress toward implementing its new approach for managing toxic chemicals, but it may take more than a decade to complete risk assessments for the 83 chemicals designated as priorities because the agency lacks toxicity and exposure data and it has not identified necessary funding and staffing levels, the Government Accountability Office says. Of the 83 priority chemicals, EPA initiated assessments for seven chemicals in 2012 and plans to start 18 more in 2013 and 2014.

GREENWIRE
Sequestration pushes conservation agency toward 'breaking point' Sequestration has affected the federal government's ability to put in place conservation measures on farmland, according to several organizations that work closely with the Agriculture Department. The effects of the across-the-board spending cuts on farmland conservation programs, which have already taken large cuts in the last several budget cycles, have been lost amid all the talk about furloughs to meat inspectors and reductions in farmers' subsidies, they say. The groups worry that the next round of budget cuts could bring the programs, which include the popular Conservation Stewardship Program and the Conservation Reserve Program, past their breaking point."These farmers and landowners need to have those conservation tools," said Jim Inglis, government affairs representative at Pheasants Forever, a habitat conservation group. "If they're not there, if they're not going to continue, there will be no incentive to continue the practices. We need to recognize that they need that financial and technical assistance."

KEYSTONE XL: Groups spend millions on pipeline lobbying A total of 48 groups have lobbied on the proposed Keystone XL pipeline, according to files disclosed last week. The American Petroleum Institute increased its lobbying spending in the first...

ASSOCIATED PRESS
Methane report from EPA further splits fracking camps The federal Environmental Protection Agency has dramatically lowered its estimate of how much of a potent heat-trapping gas leaks during natural gas production, in a shift with major implications for a debate that has divided environmentalists: Does the recent boom in fracking help or hurt the fight against climate change? Oil and gas drilling companies had pushed for the change, but there have been differing scientific estimates of the amount of methane that leaks from wells, pipelines and other facilities during production and delivery. Methane is the main component of natural gas. The new EPA assessment is "kind of an earthquake" in the debate over drilling, said Michael Shellenberger, the president of the Breakthrough Institute, an environmental group based in Oakland, Calif. "This is great news for anybody concerned about the climate and strong proof that existing technologies can be deployed to reduce methane leaks." The scope of the EPA's revision was vast. In a mid-April report on greenhouse emissions, the agency now says that tighter pollution controls instituted by the industry resulted in an average annual decrease of 41.6 million metric tons of methane emissions from 1990 through 2010, or more than 850 million metric tons overall. That's about a 20 percent reduction from previous estimates. The agency converts the methane emissions into their equivalent in carbon dioxide, following standard scientific practice.

Tainted well water case ends in guilty verdict CHICAGO - After a former suburban Chicago water official was convicted Monday for lying about secretly mixing carcinogen-tainted well water into the village's drinking supply, the sense of bitterness and betrayal among residents remained. Speaking through her tears shortly after the verdict, Crestwood resident Tricia Krause, who was credited with first raising the alarm about the water quality, said village officials had displayed shocking callousness. "What did the citizens of Crestwood and my family do to the water department? Nothing," she said at the federal courthouse in Chicago. "We were secretly poisoned and it wasn't right." Longtime water department supervisor Theresa Neubauer, 55, stared down at the defense table earlier Monday and showed no emotion as a judge read the verdict , guilty on all 11 counts. But addressing reporters later, she struggled to keep her composure. "I'm devastated," she said, her voice breaking. "My family and friends are devastated." Neubauer, who is on paid leave as Crestwood's police chief, was found guilty of making false statements to environmental regulators. Each of the 11 counts carries a maximum five-year prison term. The judge set a tentative sentencing date of Oct. 2.